SPSS PROGRAMS FOR CFSR PERMANENCY PROFILE RESULTS

A ONE-PAGE OVERVIEW ON USING SPSS TO CREATE CFSR DATA
(FOR MORE INFO, SEE MORE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WHICH FOLLOW)

1. Obtain the unduplicated annual foster care files for FY98, FY99 and FY00, and the most complete and recently submitted 2001a foster care data file. These files should be in ASCII format with a filename extension of "dat". When working with any of the SPSS program files (i.e., "syntax" files which end in ".sps"), always check and change the default directory, subdirectories and data file names in the program, to correctly call up, create and save the data files under the right filenames.

2. Transform ASCII data files into SPSS data files: **WHEN** working with ASCII data files in which race (FC#8, FC#52 and FC#54) is reported with a single value, you must use the *dat2sav1.sps* program to convert the ASCII file into an SPSS data file. **WHEN** working with an ASCII file in which race is reported Yes or No for all race data elements (FC#8a-f, FC#52a-f and FC#54a-f), you must use the *dat2sav2.sps* syntax file to transform the ASCII data file into an SPSS data file.

3. Run the year-specific versions of *pops.sps* syntax files on each of the appropriate annual files (FY97, FY98, FY99 and FY00), to create five new sub-population files (*entry, exits, inc1st, inc* and *served*) for that year. Be sure to create the sub-pop data files for each of the years with which you will be working—future year files will be needed to generate First-Time Entry Cohort (FTEC) Permanency data.

4. Run the year-specific versions of *FinalSA.sps* syntax files with the appropriate year-specific sub-population data files, to generate the Point-in-Time Permanency Profile results. Save the output for future reference.

5. Run the year-specific versions of *creatftec.sps* syntax files which will begin with that year's entry file, call up subsequent year exit files, and finally check the 2001a file, in order to generate the First-Time Entry Cohort Permanency Profile results, including the FTEC median length of stay. Some new files (e.g., *count*, *cohort* and *all-dis* data files) will be created to accomplish this. Save the output for future reference.

6. Run year-specific versions of *IncInc1st.sps* syntax files with the appropriate year-specific *entry* data files, to generate the estimated undercount of children in care on the first day of the year for the first Permanency Profile footnote.

7. Run year-specific versions of *9served.sps* syntax files with the appropriate year-specific *entry* and *inc1st* data files, to generate the foster care-based denominator for the second Safety Outcome Measure, "Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Care (for Jan-Sep)."

SPSS SYNTAX PROGRAMS USED FOR THE CFSR PERMANENCY PROFILE

Dat2sav1.sps --
Transforms ASCII-format foster care file into an SPSS data file. Use only with files in the "single race" format required for AFCARS reporting until FY2000.

Dat2sav2.sps --
Transforms ASCII-format foster care file into an SPSS data file. Use only with files in the "multiple race" format required for AFCARS reporting as of FY2000.

Pops97c, Pops98c, Pops99c, Pops00c --
Creates five new population files from the single annual file: *Exits, Entry, Inc1st, Inc,* and *Served*. These files are needed to run the *FinalSA* and *CreatFTEC* syntax files (see below).

FinalSA97c.sps, FinalSA98c.sps, FinalSA99c.sps, FinalSA00c –
Generates the frequency and cross-tabulation tables from the five population files for that year. The results appear in the same order as the Data Profile. The only exception is the median length of stay of children in care on the last day of the year, which appears earlier in the output (the 4th table) but entered in the Permanency Point-in-Time (PIT) Section VII. These tables contain all the information needed to complete the PIT sections.

Creat97FTEC.sps, Creat98FTEC.sps, Creat99FTEC.sps, Creat00FTEC.sps-
Generates frequency and cross-tabulation tables from the entry file for that year. To generate the median length of stay for First-Time Entry Cohort children, this program creates *Count* and *Cohort* data files, plus the FTEC discharge files for this and subsequent years. All FTEC discharges are merged into a final *alldis* data file, from which the median LOS is calculated (both including and excluding any "same day" children with a zero LOS). These tables contain the information needed to complete the First-Time Entry Cohort (FTEC) Permanency Profile.

IncInc1s97.sps, IncInc1s98.sps, IncInc1s99.sps, IncInc1st00c.sps
Estimates the undercount of children in care on the first day. These children are not counted as "In care on the first day," because sometime after the first day of the year, they exited foster care and then returned to foster care during the same year. Instead, these children are included in the Entry count because that reflects their most recent foster care experience. This undercount estimate is based on those children who have two removals from home (AFCARS data limitations do not allow for other estimates).

9served97c.sps, 9served98c.sps, 9served99c.sps, 9served00c.sps
Computes the number of children who were in care at any time between January 1 and September 30 of the year. This information is used as the denominator in the second Safety Outcome Measure, "Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care (for Jan-Sep)" in Section VII of the Safety Profile.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO USE SPSS FOR FY2002 CFSR RESULTS WITH FY97, FY98, FY99, FY00 AND 2001A DATA FILES

1. Introduction

This document describes how to use computer programs written by the Children's Bureau to generate the same results used in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Permanency Profile. The Permanency Profile has two major divisions: (1) the Point-in-Time Profile and (2) the First-Time Entry Cohort Profile. The Point-in-Time Profile reports the characteristics of children who are still in foster care on the last day of the Federal fiscal year, no matter when they came into care. The First-Time Entry Cohort Profile focuses on children who entered foster care for the first time during the first six months of that year.

The computer programs are written in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and designed to analyze case-specific foster care records. These SPSS programs will work correctly only with annual data files in the AFCARS format. The annual data files should have only one record (with the most recent information on that child's foster care experience) for each child in foster care during the year.

You can download the SPSS programs (filenames are *italicized* in this document) needed for the Permanency Profile analysis from the Child Welfare Review web site at:

http://www.childwelfarereview.com/

These programs are written in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software and listed with a short description of each at the end of this document. Please note that the SPSS programs are set up to run on a specific subdirectory (c:\cfsr\EZdata) for the Children's Bureau. You will need to change the directory, subdirectory and filenames to run on your PC and work with files named for your State. Be sure to change all directory, subdirectory and filenames, as needed, as you work with each set of programs.

These programs include many sets of comments throughout which explain or describe the programming that follows. In SPSS program files, each comment line begins with an asterisk. There must always be a blank line between the last line of comments and the next line of SPSS programming. DO NOT DELETE the blank line after a line or set of comments. If you delete the blank line, the program may still run but it will generate incorrect results, because it will skip the first line of programming that follows the comment.

2. Creating an annual file from the AFCARS reports

If you do not already have an unduplicated annual foster care file, you must either create or obtain an annual file with only one record for each child in care during the year. Never merge or append the two AFCARS six-month files to create an annual file--a merged file would contain duplicate records for children who were in care during both six-month periods, double-counting these children.

You can use the ACCESS program developed by the State of New Jersey to generate an annual file, available through the National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare (NRC-ITCW). If you use the New Jersey ACCESS program, you must convert the resulting data file into an SPSS data file. To do this, follow the rest of these instructions beginning with Section 3 (below), which are the same whether you created an annual foster care file or obtained an ASCII-format annual file from the Children's Bureau.

To get your State's annual foster care data file(s) from the Children's Bureau, please direct your request via email to Sharon Newburg-Rinn (snewburg-rinn@acf.dhhs.gov). You will receive a form to complete and return to the Children's Bureau. When we receive the completed form, the annual AFCARS file (formatted in fixed ASCII) will be sent to the State through the same CONNECT:DIRECT transmission method used to for State AFCARS data submissions. Using this transfer process ensures data security.

The changeover from a single-race data element to multiple-race reporting in FY2000 means that different software programs are needed for older and newer data files. Typically, the 97c, 98c, and 99c annual files used for the CFSR Data Profiles are already configured or are re-configured in the single-race format. Revised and re-submitted pre-FY2000 files and FY2000 files can now be processed in a multiple-race format (for Foster Care data elements FC#8 a-f, FC#52 a-f, and FC#54 a-f). Processing the multiple-race files follow the same general process, but with different programs.

3. Creating an SPSS data file from an ASCII file

You can now begin the process of transforming an ASCII-format annual data file into an SPSS data file. Before running *Dat2sav1.sps* or *Dat2sav2.sps* with your data file, you must edit this SPSS program file, to change the default ASCII filename to whatever your ASCII-format file is named. You should also change the name of the SPSS data file to be created. At a minimum, you should change: (1) the "EZ" part of the data file name to your two-letter State abbreviation and (2) the number of the Federal fiscal year (fy) to the correct year of your annual data file. Your annual filename should include the Federal fiscal year, represented with the letters "fy" followed by the last two numbers of the year and a "c" for annual data (e.g., 99a+99b=99c). For example, North Dakota would change the

default filename of "*EZfy99c.sav*" in this SPSS program to "*NDfy00c.sav*" to indicate that this is North Dakota's annual foster care file for Fiscal Year 2000.

Please note that the default "EZ" designation in these SPSS programs is not meant to imply that the CFSR analysis process using SPSS is "EZ"! The default two-letter combination was selected to avoid confusion since this two-letter combination does not appear in any AFCARS variable name or SPSS program statement.

Please be sure to change the directory and subdirectory names as needed, so that the SPSS program will use and create new files from the appropriate directory and subdirectory. If possible, use a minimum of subdirectories and keep the subdirectory name(s) short and simple. Doing this will minimize the changes to the SPSS programs and the potential for error.

For instance, to create an SPSS data file of FY98 foster care data on a PC "data" subdirectory, Delaware would change the "SAVE OUTFILE" statement to read:

SAVE OUTFILE 'c:\data*DEfy98c.sav*'.

New Mexico would create an FY99 SPSS data file on their network's G drive and "afcars" subdirectory by changing the "SAVE OUTFILE" statement to read:

SAVE OUTFILE 'g:\afcars*NMfy99c.sav*'.

After completing this step, the annual data will be in an SPSS data file named for your State and the Federal fiscal year in which the children were in foster care.

4. Creating the Sub-population SPSS Data Files for Analysis:

Select the "*popsYY.sps*" SPSS program file that matches the year of your data. If you are working with FY99 data, for example, you will run the *pops99.sps* to generate five different sub-populations from your FY99 foster care data file. DO NOT use the *pops99.sps* file with FY97, FY98 or FY00 data—this would damage and distort the data files. Every SPSS program or "syntax" file (ending in ".sps") which includes a two-digit year in the filename will work correctly ONLY with foster care data for that year.

When you run the *pops99.sps* program, it will create the following five sub-population data files:

Inc1st99c.sav = children in foster care as of October 1, 1998 (except for those children who later exit and re-enter care during FY99)

Entry99c.sav = children entering foster care on or after October 1, 1998 and on or before September 30, 1999

Exits99c.sav = children who discharged from foster care on or after October 1, 1998 and on or before September 30, 1999
Inc99c.sav = children in foster care as of September 30, 1999
Served99c.sav = children in foster care at any time between October 1, 1998 and September 30, 1999 (created by adding *Inc1st99c.sav* + *Entry99c.sav*)

The same set of sub-population data files will be created from any of the "pops" program, except that the sub-population files will contain information for that year. You are now ready to create the same information as that in the CFSR Point-in-Time Permanency Profile from these five data files.

As noted earlier, you will want to generate the sub-population data files for subsequent years as well as the current year, since future year exits will be important to correctly calculate the median Length of Stay for the First-Time Entry Cohort.

5. Getting the Point-in-Time Permanency Profile Information

After selecting the correct year-specific "*FinalSA"* file and changing default directory, subdirectory and filename specifications in this file, you can run this program to generate the Point-in-Time (PIT) Permanency Profile frequencies and cross-tabulation tables. If you're working with FY00 data, you will be editing and running the *FinalSA00c.sps* file to use the 00c sub-population data files.

The first few tables identify the number of children in care at the beginning and end of the year, as well as the number of children who enter and leave foster care during the fiscal year. The next set of tables contain the number and percent of foster care children by placement settings, permanency goals, number of placements, number of removals, and reasons for discharge (for those children who left foster care by the last day of the year). The cross-tabulation tables at the end of the output summarize results for the permanency outcome indicators.

You may save this output with an appropriate filename such as *PITprofile00.spo*. You can also print a copy of the output and compare this information to the official CFSR PIT Permanency Profile or begin to create your own State Profile from this information.

6. Getting the First-Time Entry Cohort Permanency Profile Information

To obtain First-Time Entry Cohort (FTEC) Permanency Profile information, you will use the *creat99ftec.sps* program (or the *creat97ftec.sps*, *creat98ftec.sps* or *creat00ftec.sps* if you are working with fy97, fy98 or fy00 data). As always, you

must first make whatever changes are needed to the program's default directory, subdirectory and filenames.

This program will first use your State's "entry" data file to identify those children entering foster care for the first time during the first six months of that fiscal year. For instance, *creat99ftec.sps* will call up your *entry99c.sav* data file, to select out the FY99 First-Time Entry Cohort (FTEC) from all children who entered foster care anytime between October 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999. The program computes the number and percent of children who entered care during this period for the first time, as well as the number and percent of the other children who also entered care during this same period but who have been in foster care before. Similar to the Point-in-Time results, the FTEC output tables contain the information on the first-time entry foster care children by placement settings, case goals, number of placements, and reasons for discharge (for those children who left foster care by the end of the year).

For this program to complete the calculation of the FTEC's median length of stay, later foster care files will be needed. The program will need to look at more recent foster care records, because the median length of stay cannot be fixed until at least half of the FTEC children have exited from foster care. Since this usually doesn't happen until sometime beyond the current year, the FTEC program looks for exiting children who initially entered care during the FTEC timeframe. In fact, the program automatically calls up exit files for subsequent years and the most recent available AFCARS report period, even if the FTEC median length of stay (LOS) was reached in an earlier report year.

For instance, to compute the median length of stay of the FY98 FTEC, the program will also check the FY99 and FY00 exit sub-population files, as well as the most recent 20001a foster care AFCARS file. This requires you to have the 2001a foster care data file (in SPSS format) available for this program. If needed, you can request a copy of your most recent 2001a foster care file in ASCII format from the Children's Bureau (see Section 2 above).

During the first year of the CFSR reviews, the most recent file used to compute the FTEC median length of stay was the 2000a foster care file. In the second year of the reviews, the most recent file used to compute the FTEC median length of stay is the 2001a foster care file.

Keep in mind that the FTEC median length of stay is reported in months. If the results of the final table for the FTEC median length of stay is "500," you will know that this impossibly high number indicates that the median length of stay has not yet been reached by this First-Time Entry Cohort. It is especially likely that the median length of stay will not have been reached for the FY00 FTEC since these children entered care as recently as March 31, 2000 and we can only check for FY00 FTEC children exiting foster care through March 31, 2001.

This program also checks for "same day" children in the FTEC, to identify the number of children who entered and exited care on the same day. "Same Day" children are included in the initial calculation of the FTEC median length of stay and reported in the first table titled "LOS with 'same day' kids (500=Not yet reached)." The program then computes the FTEC median length of stay without the "same day" children and reports this results in the next table titled "LOS without 'same day' kids (for FTEC footnote)." This second result is reported in a footnote to the FTEC portion of the Permanency Profile.

7. Footnote info and FC denominator for the 2nd Safety Measure

To complete the CFSR Permanency Profile footnote information, you will select, update and run one of the *IncInc1st.sps* programs. Like many of the programs you have already used, these programs can only be used correctly when you match the year in the file name with the year of your data. If you are working with FY00 data, then you must use the *IncInc1st00.sps* program. The year-specific program is run for each of the years in the Data Profile, to produce the results reported in the first footnote of the Permanency Profile.

This *IncInc1st.sps* program estimates the undercount of children who were in care on the first day. There will always be an undercount of children in care on the first day. This is because of the updating that occurs when the two six-month files (the "a" and "b" files) are combined into an unduplicated annual ("c") file. Each child's record in the annual file is updated to reflect the most recent foster care experience during the year, so that a child who exits and then returns to foster care during the year is counted as an entry to foster care. Similarly, if a child exits foster care two or more times during the year, the child will be counted as an exit only once, and the child's date of discharge will be the most recent date that the child left foster care.

While the programming described in this document does not create the Safety Profile, it does generate the number of foster care children served in the first six months of the calendar year, information that becomes the denominator of the second Safety Measure "Child Abuse and Neglect in Foster Care." To compute the January-September number of foster care children served, select the year-appropriate SPSS program from among the programs titled *9moserved.sps*. Before running the program, be sure to first edit the directory, subdirectory and filename specifications so that the program will run correctly. The only output of this program is the number of children that were served from January through September of that year. This number will be the denominator used in the calculation of the second Safety Measure in the Safety Profile.